

Appl. No. 09/887,966
Amdt. dated December 8, 2004
Reply to Office Action of September 16, 2004

REMARKS

In the aforementioned Office communication, claim 18 was objected to for the misspelling of the word "used". That misspelling has been corrected herein. Further, claims 3-5, 7 and 8 were rejected under Section 112 as being indefinite with the examiner noting particular issues of claims 3 and 7 which have been remedied herein. Accordingly, the rejection of claims 3-5, 7 and 8 under Section 112 is felt to have been overcome.

Claims 1-3, 6-8, 16-18, 20 and 21 have been rejected either under Section 102 or Section 103 based on the disclosures in the patents to Abler, Kinzinger et al., Christie et al., and Dreyfus.

In addressing the rejection of the claims based on prior art, applicant will not specifically address each of the distinguishing features between the present invention and the disclosures in the cited references but rather point out the deficiencies in those disclosures with regard to the present invention as now claimed.

One feature of the present invention, which is not shown or suggested in the prior art, is to provide a supporting conveyor belt beneath the fabric as it is being heated so that the fabric does not drag and become distorted during the heat treatment thereof. Such a concept is not shown or suggested in any of the prior art and this feature has been incorporated into claim 1 as amended herein so that it is felt to be patentably distinct from the prior art. Claims 2-8 being dependent upon claim 1 are felt to be allowable for the same reason.

Independent claim 16 has also been amended to be specific to a fabric of the type treatable in the apparatus of the present invention, namely a fabric having first and

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second sheets of material coupled to each other by elongated vanes. Independent claim 16 has been amended to state that the method includes the provision of a fabric having first and second sheets of material coupled to each other by elongated vanes and further includes the step of feeding the fabric along a pathway with the vanes extending in the direction of the pathway before tensioning, heating, and removing the tension to relieve the stress in the fabric. Inasmuch as none of the prior art references disclose or suggest the treatment of a fabric having sheets of material with interconnected vanes, it is not felt they can disclose or suggest a method of treating such a fabric to relieve stress. In fact, the patents to Abler, Kinzinger et al., and Dreyfus are specifically related to methods of producing fabrics as opposed to relieving stress in fabrics and, accordingly, are not felt to show or suggest the relief of stress in a fabric and particularly where that fabric is as specifically now defined in independent claim 16. Similarly, the Christie et al. patent is directed to an apparatus for manufacturing a fabric even though it does mention the apparatus can be used in critical treatments and/or finishing operations while the fabric is maintained under certain conditions. As with the Abler, Kinzinger et al., and Dreyfus patents, the Christie et al. patent does not disclose or suggest a method for relieving stress in a fabric as now specifically defined and accordingly claim 16 is felt to be patentably distinct from the prior art. Claims 17, 18, and 20 being dependent upon claim 16 are felt to be allowable for the same reasons.

Having removed the objectionable material from the application and amended the claims to remove the objectionable material under Section 112 as well as render them patentably distinct from the prior art, it is felt each claim remaining in the application is now in condition for allowance.

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It is therefore courteously requested that the application be passed to issue, but certainly should the examiner find any remaining issues, it would be appreciated if she would contact attorney for applicant at the below listed number.

Dated this 8th day of December 2004.

Respectfully submitted,



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GMP/dtc

cc: HDBV and HDI (HN-073.00-353)